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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

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WAR-DEGENERACY OF THE CHURCH.

"The church has always been right in regard to peace."—WILLIAM ALLEN, D. D.

No. II.

PROOFS FROM POPERY AND PROTESTANTISM.*

One of the glorious titles of our Lord is *Prince of peace*; and when the wonderful child, expected for ages, was at last born, the company of heaven's messengers announced his birth with that famous anthem in the skies, "Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace, good-will towards men." When this Prince of peace executed his ministry, he virtually preached against war in every sermon: "Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the peace-makers; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I say unto you resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. All they that take the sword, shall perish by the sword."

But those who call themselves Christians have forgotten the title of their King, and turned his glory into shame. The gospel, which was meant to be a word of sovereign power by its own peculiar virtues, and to be the rod and staff of Him whose kingdom is not of this world, has, by the fleshly counsels and worldly compliances of its nominal disciples, been made to appear an instrument of human force, the religion of a warlike sect, the stimulus and the decoration of military renown. For

* This article is chiefly extracted from a volume of Letters by R. M. Beverley, Esq., England.

if we first consider him who calls himself the vicar of Christ upon earth, the bishop of bishops, the Roman pontiff, and the most ancient possessor of Christendom, we shall in vain search for any legacy of peace that he ever has left to the world. On the contrary, the pope was the fomentor of almost every war that harassed Europe, till his influence in the cabinets of European potentates so declined that it could no longer be exerted to create confusion and discord among sovereigns, who had become too wise to listen to the evil counsels of a despicable priest. The pope can now only intrigue about Jesuits and monks, or exert his diplomatic skill in the framing of a Concordat, which any urgency converts into waste paper. The old disturber of nations is therefore now quiet, because he cannot be tumultuous; and he is peaceful, because he cannot go to war; and as he is, moreover, an insolvent debtor, and is unable to pay his own body-guards, there is no fear of his blowing the trumpet of battle again, as he used to do in the days of Europe's darkness.

Still the Roman Catholic religion is essentially warlike. Not only are the operations of war blessed by its ritual, but even the Virgin Mary is made by them a captain of armies and a commander-in-chief of the most ferocious soldiers that have appeared on the field of battle since the crusades of Languedoc. Don Carlos has nominated the Virgin Mary commander-in-chief of his bandit forces; and in the days of Richard II, the archbishop Arundel complained of the Lollards for despising the holy Virgin, to whose influence the English were mainly indebted for their victories!

There have been fighting popes,—popes who themselves commanded armies in person. There have been fighting bishops, fighting saints, fighting cardinals. Masses have been said on the field of battle; and holy water, crosses, relics, standards are said to have done wonders in turning the fate of contending armies. Popes and saints have preached “war to the knife,” and “blood to the horses’ bridles.” St. Bernard, the seraphic abbot of Clairvaux, whose works are a sort of text-book of sublimated devotion with the mystical school, exerted his vast influence in the papacy to excite the murderous passions of mankind, and his restless eloquence kindled the crusade of 1148, from which also emanated the luckless expeditions of the next century. “Calmly seated in his cell, the gospels open before him, and the events of the first crusade fresh in his

recollection, St. Bernard thought that nothing was more praiseworthy or pious, than to lash the passions of the western nations to a new fury for exterminating the infidel powers in the East." His language is a strange instance indeed of studied iniquity. "Go forward," said he, "go forward, ye soldiers, and with a dauntless mind, drive back the enemies of the cross of Christ, being assured of this, that neither life nor death *can separate you from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus*, and always remembering this in every danger, that *whether we live, or whether we die, we are the Lord's*. What glorious conquerors you will return from battle! what blessed martyrs will you die in the field! for a soldier of Christ, I say, kills in security, and dies in security; he benefits himself when he is dying in the field, he benefits Christ when he is killing in battle."

But sentiments like these, frightful and impious as they are, are by no means singular in the Papacy. St. Pius V, and divers other popes of sanguinary memory, have written with a pen not less bloody than that which the seraphic St. Bernard employed to excite mankind to havoc and slaughter; and, in one word, we may consider the Vatican as a school of blood and murder for all Europe, which, till the eighteenth century, was kept in a state of constant agitation by the intrigues of the priests of Rome.

Nor is Protestantism free from the guilt of the same charge. It started into being, armed from head to foot for bloody conflict, nor dreamed for ages of questioning the right or the duty to wield the sword in defence and propagation of its principles. The crusades of the dark ages were virtually acted over again in the religious wars of the Reformation, which are said to have sacrificed no less than 30,000,000 lives. There is not a country in Europe, scarce a province, that has not been drenched with blood shed by Protestant hands; and not only did the Reformers themselves inculcate the duty of fighting for their faith, but some of them actually fell, sword in hand, on the field of battle.

The Protestant Church of England is warlike in a high degree. The Anglican Episcopalians are a fighting sect; their liturgy is belligerent, their head is a soldier, their language is threatening and violent, and the sermons of their priests have frequently been preached for the express purpose of exciting the martial propensities of a deceived and credulous people. Twice every day, in every cathedral in England, do the clergy solemnly pray to God that the king "may vanquish and over-

come all his enemies ;” and up to this present hour it never perhaps in one single instance has been taught by any clergyman, that war is an illegal and impious trade for Christians. On the contrary, the American war, and the war against the French republic, were frequently commended from the pulpit in impassioned harangues ; and many a dignitary owed his elevation in the church to his servile zeal “for the just and necessary war.”*

The Dissenters have hitherto copied the dominant sect in their belligerent propensities. The Independents came into the world at first, like Minerva, all armed. We know of them first as a fighting sect of saints, following Oliver Cromwell in his “*crowning mercies*” of victory after victory, till they had placed their great captain on the throne of England’s ejected kings. The language of the pious soldiers of the Protectorate may well be placed side by side with the epistles of St. Bernard or St. Pius V.

Thomas Harrison, one of king Charles’s judges, a famous soldier and friend of Oliver Cromwell, used occasionally to write letters to his general from the camp, mingling in his correspondence notices of war, and effusions of piety. “My lord,” said he, “let waiting on Jehovah be the greatest and most considerable business you have every day ; reckon it more than to eat, sleep, or counsel together ; run aside sometimes from your company, and get a word with the Lord. Why should you not have three or four precious souls always standing at your elbow, with whom you might now and then turn into a corner ? I have found refreshment and mercy in such a way. Here is little news ; only Charles Vane is returned from Portugal, who left our fleet indifferently well. They have seized nine of the Portugal ships. The Father of mercies visit and keep your soul close to him continually, protect, prosper and preserve you, is the prayer of,” &c.

After the Revolution of 1688, the Dissenters joined the war-party with all their hearts. Their interests were bound up

* It is amusing enough to note the conflicting views of Christians in England and America respecting our revolutionary war. In this country, ministers were its chief advocates with the multitude ; the few who questioned its lawfulness or expediency, dared not provoke the people’s wrath by an avowal of their sentiments ; and whole bodies of ministers have since made it a matter of sincere and solemn congratulation, that the predecessors of their sect abetted that war ; while in England, ministers and Christians, with equal confidence and zeal, denounced it as a rebellion, condemned by the plainest dictates of reason and revelation. What infallible judges of right and wrong are men in their own case ! Would the members of a piratical community be tolerated in denouncing the piracies from which they all gained their livelihood ? With such judges on the bench, how many of the culprits would be condemned ? Ep.

with those of king William; they were personal enemies of Louis XIV, and of the house of Stuart; and, from the flight of James II to the battle of Preston Pans, they were as thorough advocates of battle as could be found in the British realms. Dr. Doddridge is said to have enlisted a regiment for the service of government; and the warlike spirit observable in Dr. Watts's hymns, proves beyond doubt, that the Dissenters had a martial echo in their hearts responsive to the spirit-stirring alarum of drum and trumpet.

“Go with our armies to the fight,
Like a confederate God;
In vain confederate powers unite
Against thy lifted rod.
Our troops shall gain a wide renown
By thine assisting hand;
’Tis God that treads the mighty down,
And makes the feeble stand.”

“In his salvation is our hope,
And in the name of Israel’s God,
Our troops shall lift their banners up,
Our navies spread their flags abroad.
O may the memory of thy name
Inspire our armies to the fight!
Our foes shall fall and die with shame,
Or quit the field with shameful fright.”

John Wesley was a decided advocate of war. Educated in the school of ultra-toryism, he never was able to perceive that the profession of arms is incompatible with the gospel. He had high notions of the power of constituted authority; he prided himself that some of his chief followers were “good soldiers;” and thus let slip a golden opportunity for instituting a sect whose influence by this time would have well-nigh silenced the din of arms. The principles of peace are entirely unknown among the Wesleyan Methodists.*

We see, then, that the fanaticism of the banner has been conspicuous among all the leading sects of Christendom. The priests of the Vatican and of Lambeth have excited wars of oppression; the Protestant Dissenters have never yet emancipated themselves from the great delusion, that it is meritorious to fight “for their God, their liberties, and their country.” The new creation, covenanted to Jesus of Nazareth, has been retarded by the united efforts of Papist, Episcopalian, Puritan and Methodist; and the dove of peace, which came with an olive-

* This is said of Methodists in *England*.—ED.

branch to assure the world that the tide of carnage was now turned, has been driven backwards by a strange concord of rival sects, to make way for the cruel eagle of war, the harbinger of oppression and desolation to the earth.

And the evil here is very great, if we remember that Christian pietists have not only tacitly permitted war, but have frequently defended and advocated it by a miserable perversion of Scripture, and dangerous sentiments of distorted devotion. "Some duties grow among thorns," said the pious Samuel Rutherford, "as to be killed all the day long, and to take patiently the spoiling of our goods for Christ. Some duties grow among roses, and are honorable and glorious duties, *as to kill and subdue in a lawful war the enemies of God*. The former are no sign of wrath, nor the latter of being duly convinced of the excellency of Christ, except in so far as we use them, *through the grace of Christ, as becometh saints*."*

Jeremy Taylor, in his "*Ductor Dubitantium*," has laid it down as a canon of Christian morals, that lying, deceiving and dissembling, besides the ordinary acts of violence, are lawful in war, and has undertaken to point out the lies that may or may not be told, by generals who are endeavoring to outwit one another.

The religion of Scotland was likewise the offspring and the advocate of blood. It has from the first relied on the sword as its chief guardian; and the Kirk brands as heresy the belief, that Christianity is not to be maintained by force of arms. In 1728, Mr. Glass was tried by the synod of Angus and Mearns for this very heresy. When asked, "Is it unlawful, in your opinion, to defend the true religion by arms, or not?" he replied, "The true religion cannot be defended by arms, as *may the natural and civil rights and liberties of mankind*." So it seems he was only half a heretic, for he still clung to the right of bloodshed in defence of our minor, our temporal interests; and the Christian who denies this latter right, would *now* be denounced as somewhat worse than a heretic.

In view of such facts, I must aver, that the body of Christians have forgotten their privileges. But it is time now to awake; and there are already signs of awakening for which we should feel thankful; and, when the truth is perceived, it must be acted on, not remissly and negligently, but with zeal and

* Christ dying, p. 187. Ed. 1647.

alacrity. *The principles of peace must be incorporated in church discipline.* The trade of war must be denounced, and a soldier must be excommunicated from the churches as an offender. Let war, offensive and defensive, be Anathema Maranatha in all Christian societies; and then, but not till then, may we declare that we love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

POPERY AND WAR: OR

AN ILLUSTRATION OF WAR-PREJUDICES FROM POPISH SUPERSTITIONS.

It is melancholy to observe how far the noble energies of the human mind may be enslaved by prejudice, and the greatest absurdities so woven into its composition, that nothing short of death itself can dissolve the charm.

Look at a few of the dogmas firmly believed by all good Catholics. 1. That the pope is the successor of Peter as the first bishop of Rome, and that he is infallible, and has power to forgive sins, to grant indulgences, and to release souls from purgatory.—2. That the Catholic church is immutable, and equally infallible with the pope; that her traditions and decrees have the same authority with the Bible itself; and that all who die out of her communion, will inevitably go directly to hell.—3. They believe in auricular confession, in masses for the dead, and in the power of the priest to pray souls out of purgatory.—4. They worship the virgin Mary, styling her the mother of God, pay homage to reliques and images, and regard the bread and wine in the sacrament as actually converted into the body and blood of Christ.—5. They hold to works of supererogation, and suppose that from the superabundance of Christ's merits, and the righteousness of martyrs, monks and other saints, there has been accumulated such a store-house of superabundant righteousness, that the pope, having the key, can at pleasure dispense as much as he chooses for money, and grant through his ministers pardon, and indulgences, and release from purgatory.

Nor is this all; for Catholics believ'd in the efficacy of holy water, holy candles, holy church-bells, exorcism of evil spirits, and the like. Such is the faith not merely of papists in the dark ages, but of sober, intelligent Catholics at the present day, with the Bible in their hands, and all the lights of modern science shining around them.